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- Addresses: Phil Gregory, P.O. Box 69, Tabubil, Western Province, Papua New Guinea.
 Greg Johnston, School of Biological Sciences, Flinders University of South Australia,
 G.P.O. Box 2100, Adelaide 5001, Australia.

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Some records of birds from Belize, Central America, including three first records

by R. Walters

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Russell's (1964) monograph has for many years been the standard work on the avifauna of Belize, formally British Honduras. Further information is contained in Barlow *et al.* (1969, 1970, 1972), Erickson (1977), Kiff & Kiff (1974) and Wood & Leberman (1987). An annotated checklist (Scott Wood *et al.* 1986) gives brief distributional and abundance details of all species known to have occurred in Belize up to the end of 1985.

Whilst researching the history of banding in Belize, I also found several significant records, which pre-date the checklist. I found a later occurrence of one species, which I repeat here as the publication in which it is recorded has a limited distribution. Except where stated, all instances of banding were carried out by W. P. Nickell. Nickell was an experienced bander, with considerable experience in the northern Neotropics. He took part in six expeditions to Belize between 1960 and 1965 (Nickell 1968).

To eliminate the possibility of input error, all computer records were verified against the original banding schedules. Sequence and nomenclature follow A. O. U. (1983).

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL *Glaucidium gnoma*

This species is not listed by Russell (1964) or Scott Wood *et al.* (1986). A single individual of this species was banded at San Antonio, Cayo District, on 24 February 1960. On 8 March 1986, a Royal Air Force

Ornithological Society expedition netted and banded another near Guacamallo Bridge, approximately 24 km south of San Antonio (Counsell 1988). In Guatemala this owl is recorded as an uncommon resident of pine and oak woodland in the highlands, ranging down into the sub-tropics (Land 1970). In Honduras it is reported as an uncommon resident of highland pine and cloud forest (Monroe 1968). The areas where both individuals were trapped in Belize fall within the Mountain Pine Ridge, an area of highland pine forest. In view of the Guatemala and Honduras records, the occurrence of this species in Belize as a rare resident should not be unexpected.

WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE *Contopus sordidulus*

Scott Wood *et al.* (1986) list this species as accidental, with one previous record (Russell 1964: 122; a specimen collected at Orange walk in December 1881). An individual of this species was banded at Stann Creek on 15 March 1960.

CASSIN'S KINGBIRD *Tyrannus vociferans*

Two banded at Stann Creek on 9 March 1960, one banded at Melinda Forestry Station on 6 March 1961, one banded on 9 March 1962 at Silver City, Stann Creek District. I can find no trace of this last locality. In addition to the above, I banded a single Cassin's Kingbird near Ladyville, Belize District, on 9 April 1985. Scott Wood *et al.* (1986) list this species as an accidental, with one record. The only published record prior to 1986 is one on the Christmas Bird Count for Belize City area, on 26 December 1985 (*American Birds* 40 (1986): 1024).

WESTERN KINGBIRD *Tyrannus verticalis*

One banded 11 miles west of Stann Creek on 16 April 1963. This species has not been previously reported from Belize. Monroe (1968) states that the Western Kingbird is a rare transient in the Caribbean lowlands of Honduras, and that there are sight records from the Swan Islands.

GREY KINGBIRD *Tyrannus dominicensis*

One banded El Cayo (San Ignacio) on 22 March 1960, another at Middlesex on 26 March 1963. Monroe (1968) lists it as a rare migrant to the Swan Islands, and probably the northern coast of Honduras. The only previous published records for Belize are by Howell *et al.* (1992).

HUTTON'S VIREO *Vireo huttoni*

Wood *et al.* (1986) list this species as a rare (less than five records) permanent resident of the Mountain Pine Ridge. Russell (1964) mentions only one record, a specimen from the Mountain Pine Ridge taken on 26 April 1888. Nickell banded two individuals of this species, one on 22 March 1963 and another on 19 March 1964. On these dates he was working in the Stann Creek Valley, between the coast at Dangriga and Middlesex. These records extend the geographical distribution of this species into the Southern Hardwood Forest.

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Address: R. Walters, Morskade 18, 2332 GB Leiden, Netherlands.

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Status of migratory *Cuculus* cuckoos in Zaïre

by Michel Louette & Paul Herroelen

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Basing ourselves on the collections in the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren (KMMA), the Royal Institute of Natural Sciences, Brussels (KBIN) and the British Museum (Natural History), Tring (BMNH), we have found that some points regarding the status of migratory *Cuculus* cuckoos in Zaïre need clarification.

Cuculus canorus

According to Seel (1984), the Cuckoo evacuates the northern hemisphere virtually completely in December-January. This would imply that the northwestern African-Iberian race *bangsi* crosses the Equator (and reaches Zaïre); this population is small, both in size and in number. Vaurie (1965) gave as range in wing chord measurements for *bangsi* males 203–217 mm against 218–233 mm in nominate *canorus*, and we find on average females in all races smaller than males.